

Sam Drzymala, 202-226-4661(o), 202-674-0594(c)

Thursday, February 3, 2011

(WASHINGTON, D.C.) – In recognition of his leadership in fighting for quality health care for veterans in Missouri and across the country, Rep. Russ Carnahan (MO-3) has been offered and has accepted a position on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee.

**"I've always felt strongly that veterans deserve the very best care available," Carnahan said. "The problems at John Cochran VA Medical Center make it abundantly clear that we can never rest in our efforts to ensure veterans are in fact receiving that top quality care. This new committee assignment will help me fight that battle.**

Carnahan has [consistently worked to improve veterans' health care](#), championing measures to improve VA health services and pressing the VA to make changes in the wake of problems at the Cochran facility that potentially exposed over 1,800 veterans to Hepatitis and HIV. Last August, [Carnahan held](#)

[nearly a dozen open meetings with veterans](#)

throughout the 3rd Congressional District to discuss the recent safety lapses and other veterans' health care issues, and in 2010, he was one of only 20 "exceptional leaders" to earn a perfect A+ rating on veterans' issues from the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America Action Fund.

**“I’m excited that Russ Carnahan has joined the Committee on Veterans’ Affairs,”** said Committee Ranking Member Rep. Bob Filner (D-CA). **“**  
**I’ve had the opportunity to see him fighting for the veterans of Missouri and I know that he will be a forceful advocate for veterans throughout the country.**  
**”**

Last month, [Filner joined Carnahan at a meeting with St. Louis area veterans and nurses who work at the Cochran facility](#) to discuss the ongoing investigations into Cochran – as well as new concerns about staffing, lack of supplies and infection control.

**“We can't be satisfied with small changes around the edges,”** said Carnahan. **“It’s becoming increasingly clear that fundamental changes in the culture at Cochran are needed to make sure the sole focus of every person working there is how best to care for veterans.**  
**”**

###